



City of Lincoln, Illinois

Frequently Asked Questions

Topic: Historic Phone Booth

Question: Why is the phone booth on top of the fire station?

Answer: Today the phone booth is a focal point for the Historic Route 66 and a regular conversation piece.

We are unaware of the actual dates, but the phone booth was an early tool used by the Lincoln Fire Department, originally placed on top of the building to provide a lookout position for severe weather spotters. Firefighters, usually a young new firefighter, would report to the phone booth with a radio or at the time, a direct hard wire phone line connected to the apparatus bay. If severe weather such as wall clouds, funnel clouds, or tornadoes were spotted, the fire fighter would call downstairs and have the storm siren activated.

With today's technologies in the weather service, firefighters are not needed to spot weather from the phone booth, even though the Fire Department is requested to confirm severe weather. The old storm siren that also accompanied the phone booth on the City Hall building was removed from the roof in 2009 after it was no longer serviceable.

The phone booth also was on the removal list during the roof replacement in 2009, but because of the historic value and the tradition, citizens spoke up and the historic conversation piece was kept in place.

Today, many people who visit downtown Lincoln stop by and ask firefighters many questions about the phone booth. Firefighters inform the visitors that on occasion Superman stops by for a change of clothing. Visitors are not allowed on the roof to see the phone booth due to the lack of handrails and safety devices.